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PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Tiffany M. Stewart, Ph.D.

CONTRACTING ORGANIZATION: Pennington Biomedical Research Center  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808-4124

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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The specific aims of the study are to: 1) compare body weight changes associated with participation in a population-based intervention in comparison to participation in a control group, 2) compare changes in fitness associated with participation in a population-based intervention in comparison to participation in a control group, 3) evaluate improvement in body weight and fitness in the control group when these participants are provided access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention, and 4) evaluate the maintenance of changes in body weight and fitness after discontinuation of the promotion associated with the H.E.A.L.T.H. program. The study is a cluster (group) randomized controlled trial in which clusters of Army National Guard units are randomly assigned to one of two treatment arms: 1) immediate access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention or 2) delayed access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention. The research design include two years of baseline data, two years of the controlled comparison of the two treatment arms, followed by two years of delivery of the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention to the treatment arm that received a delayed intervention. Access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention will be continued for one additional year for both treatment arms to evaluate utilization and efficacy after discontinuation of the H.E.A.L.T.H. promotion program. Data will be collected from two sources: 1) the Unit Personnel System-Command Management System (UPS-CMS) and 2) the H.E.A.L.T.H. website (primary). Data will also be collected using routinely obtained annual Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFT) as an adjunct source. Participants are not be required to sign voluntary consent forms due to their anonymity. The H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention will be available for all population Soldiers during periods designated by the research study design.					
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## **Introduction**

The Pennington Biomedical Research Center (PBRC) is delivering a program to the Louisiana Army National Guard (LANG) called Healthy Eating, Activity, and Lifestyle Training Headquarters (H.E.A.L.T.H.) (1). This program was designed to address weight management needs and non-compliance with the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP) (2) and the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) (3).

The H.E.A.L.T.H. program has two components: 1) an online program that includes personalized eating, fitness, and APFT tools to help Soldiers stay fit and meet AR600-9 and APFT standards, and 2) a promotion program designed to prompt awareness and regular usage of the website program. The H.E.A.L.T.H. program aims to empower Soldiers in healthy and safe lifestyle change to sustain healthy weight and performance on a year-round basis. The H.E.A.L.T.H. website was specifically designed to aid military personnel in achieving healthy management of body weight, healthy nutrition, physical fitness, and combat readiness.

The H.E.A.L.T.H. study is a cluster (group) randomized controlled trial in which clusters of Louisiana Army National Guard (LANG) units will be randomly assigned to one of two treatment arms: 1) Intervention arm 1: Immediate access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention or 2) Intervention arm 2: Delayed access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention (control group). The research design will include two years of baseline data (collected retroactively), two years of the controlled comparison of the two treatment arms, followed by two years of delivery of the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention to the treatment arm that received a delayed intervention. Access to the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention will be continued for one additional year for both treatment arms to evaluate utilization and efficacy after discontinuation of the H.E.A.L.T.H. promotion program (See Appendix A for the Study Timeline).

Data will be collected from two sources: 1) Unit Personnel System/Command Management System (UPS/CMS), and 2) the H.E.A.L.T.H. website. The intervention will be delivered to the entire LANG population and all Soldiers in the LANG will be anonymous participants in the study. Data will also be collected using routinely obtained annual Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFT). Participants will not be required to sign voluntary consent forms due to their anonymity.

## **Body**

This project delivers a weight measurement system for the LANG Soldiers and an Internet-based intervention for assisting Soldiers' adherence to body weight and physical fitness standards described in AR 600-9 and FM 21-20. This Internet-based program, called H.E.A.L.T.H. (1), is integrated with a promotion program that uses the command structure and existing communication functions of the LANG to promote the use of the internet-based intervention. This approach can be viewed as a population-based health promotion program that will be integrated into existing programs that are designed to assist overweight or unfit Soldiers, e.g., the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP) (2).

PBRC personnel work closely with a Louisiana Executive Advisory Committee (LEAC), as well as a National Executive Committee to guide this research project. During the first year of the project, the primary objectives were: 1) collection of baseline data from the Unit Personnel System/Command Management System (UPS/CMS) and the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) (3), i.e., height, weight, fatness estimates, and measures of fitness, 2) assess the unique health risk communication, weight management, and fitness needs of the Louisiana Army National Guard, 3) development of the randomized controlled clusters of the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention, 4) installation of measurement equipment (scales and stadiometers) in all LANG units, 5) launch of H.E.A.L.T.H. program to intervention arm 1, and 6) future planning of promotion campaigns

and novel communication methods. These objectives were successfully completed during Year 1.

During Year 2, the objectives were: 1) collection of Year 2 APFT and height/weight data from LANG data resources, 2) continued promotion of the H.E.A.L.T.H. program to those units in intervention arm 1, 3) planning for inclusion of intervention arm 2 in Year 3 of the H.E.A.L.T.H. promotion program and 3) preliminary analysis of the initial data that was collected since the start of the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention. These objectives were successfully completed during Year 2.

During Year 3 the objectives were: 1) collection of Year 3 APFT and height/weight data from LANG data resources, 2) launch of the promotion of the H.E.A.L.T.H. program to units within Intervention Arm 2 clusters (control), 3) planning for Year 4 of the study, and 4) preliminary analysis of data collected since the start of the H.E.A.L.T.H. intervention and presentation of these preliminary results at the December, 2013 annual executive meeting. These objectives were successfully completed during Year 3.

During Year 4, the study objectives were: 1) collection of Year 4 APFT and height/weight data from LANG data resources, 2) continued promotion of the H.E.A.L.T.H. program to units within Intervention Arms 1 and 2 clusters, 3) planning for Year 5 of the study, and 4) preliminary analysis of the data. These objectives were successfully completed during Year 4. In addition, preliminary analyses were presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> *International Soldiers' Physical Performance* conference (6) in an oral talk in Boston, MA, on August 18-21, 2014. Dr. Stewart also met with select executive members about preliminary results in lieu of an annual executive meeting this year. All progress and results on the study were found to be satisfactory.

During Year 5, the study objectives will be: 1) collection of final APFT and height/weight data from LANG data resources, 2) discontinuation of the promotion program for the H.E.A.L.T.H. website program and observation of usage by LANG members from all clusters in

the study, 3) analysis and further dissemination of data, and 4) planning and preparation for issuance of papers on the study.

### **H.E.A.L.T.H. Website**

The H.E.A.L.T.H. website was launched (1Apr2010) and is currently being used by the LANG population. PBRC is continuing to making upgrades to the website in order to make it more user-friendly and accommodating to LANG Soldiers and their families, as well as add fresh content and tools to encourage use of the website for weight management purposes. Upgrades to the website will continue to be made throughout the project.

The H.E.A.L.T.H. website was made mobile and is now able to be accessed and utilized via Smartphone devices, e.g. Droid, iphone, Blackberry. The launch of the program on Smartphones has enabled field managers to engage Soldiers more efficiently at events. At drill events, it has been noted that most Soldiers have Smartphones. As the Field Managers register Soldiers for the H.E.A.L.T.H. program, the smart phone capability of the website allows the Field Managers to reach more Soldiers in a shorter period of time. This capability also allows for more convenient and “portable” day-to-day use of the program by Soldiers and their family members. Additionally, the smartphone application has been updated to a more sophisticated design, to resemble an application that would be downloaded from the typical application store. These updates have greatly contributed to Soldiers’ use of the website.

### **Data Collection & Analyses**

Data collection for Year 1 was completed November 2011. Data collection for Year 2 was collected in November, 2012, prior to the annual Executive Committee meeting. Data collection for Year 3 was collected in November, 2013 in preparation for the December executive meeting, 2013. Year 4 initial data collection was accomplished in August, 2014 and discussed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> *International Soldiers’ Physical Performance* conference (6) in August,

2014, Boston, MA. Final data will be collected November, 2015 and analyzed for dissemination/publication in the final year of the study, November, 2016.

### **Promotion of the Use of the H.E.A.L.T.H. Website**

The promotion strategy for the H.E.A.L.T.H. program/website consists of a 2 step program:

- Step 1: An awareness campaign that will increase new registration in the intervention arm with a steady increase.
- Step 2: A reinforcement program that will actively communicate new features of the H.E.A.L.T.H. website and tips for usage to existing users to foster continued long-term use of the H.E.A.L.T.H. website for weight loss and weight maintenance.

This 2- step promotion strategy is based on the enrollment outcomes of the H.E.A.L.T.H. pilot studies at Fort Bragg, NC (4) and the New England Reserve Command (94<sup>th</sup> RRC) (5). The unique design of this promotion program allows both steps 1 and 2 to occur repetitively in Years 1 and 2, while also occurring simultaneously in years 3 and 4 with the inclusion of intervention arm 2 to the H.E.A.L.T.H. program.

Table 1 illustrates the website promotion schedule for distribution of materials to full time members and Traditional Guardsmen of the LANG. A typical day of promotion (during the week) requires that Field Managers make calls, have in-person meetings, give talks to LANG full time personnel, interact with unit Family Readiness Groups (FRG), and attend Soldier Readiness Programs (SRP) when they occur. The interactions of the Field Managers in each of these instances is dependent upon available time and level of awareness by the Soldier, FRG member, speed at which the SRP moves, etc. At each opportunity, the Field Managers communicate the key point of the H.E.A.L.T.H. website and provide an overview of how the website can be used to help an individual achieve their diet/nutrition and exercise/fitness goals. Further, with the use



of portable computers and the Soldier's Smartphones, Field Managers are able to register large amounts of Soldiers on site at these events.

The majority of the Field Managers' interactions with the population occur over a drill weekend. This is the time period when the Field Managers have the greatest opportunity to communicate to a large portion of a unit's Soldiers. During drill, the Field Managers are responsible for educating Traditional Guardsmen on the H.E.A.L.T.H. program and being the single point resource for issue resolution (i.e.: technical problems, application issues, etc.) to all Soldiers present. Similarly, the H.E.A.L.T.H. program has been able to develop a working relationship with the LANG Public Affairs Office (PAO), which has allowed for the targeted distribution of electronic newsletters and promotional materials. This tactic, used in combination with the in-person message distribution plan, has worked exceptionally well throughout the course of the study.

***Table 1: H.E.A.L.T.H. Promotion Schedule***

	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>
<b>Military Email</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Newsletters</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Liaisons</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Fliers</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Brochures</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Training</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Contests</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Promo Material</b>			<b>X</b>	

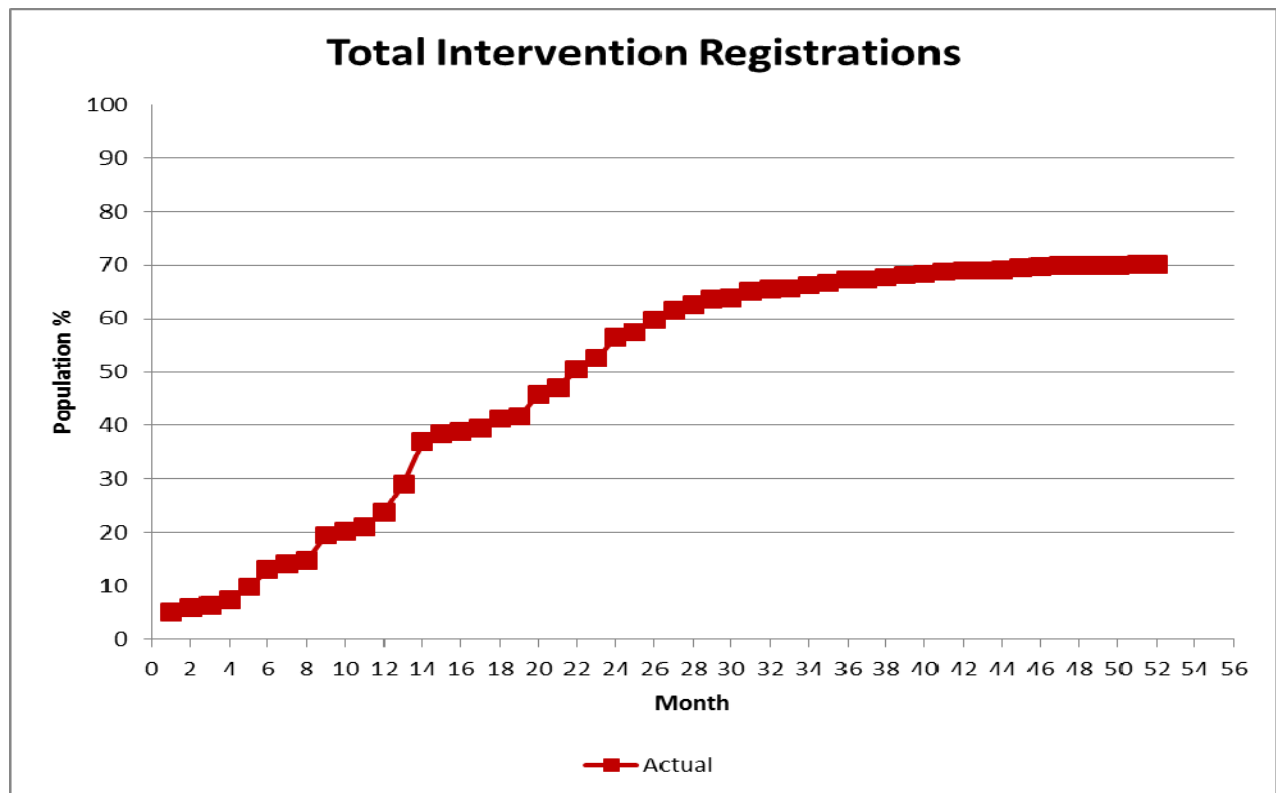
In addition, a new promotion/incentive-based program was kicked off August 1, 2013 in an effort to boost return/regular usage of the site. This effort incorporates promotional items for different levels of use. For example, if Soldiers use the website on a "regular" basis, as defined

by three times per week, for one, two or three months, they receive specific incentives for those levels of use, e.g. training shirt, gloves, water bottle, etc.

All active promotions of the website and H.E.A.L.T.H. program will cease effective 1 November 2014. This date will mark the transition of the study to a year-long observational period (to determine if Soldiers utilize the program in the absence of an active promotion program) as described in the study description and illustrated in the study timeline.

### **Intervention Website Usage Data: Preliminary Report**

The H.E.A.L.T.H. website has been available to the Soldiers and families of the LANG since April 1, 2010. To date, 3088 (91%) Soldiers and 314 (9%) civilians have registered on the H.E.A.L.T.H. website. Figure 1 illustrates the cumulative enrollment on the LANG H.E.A.L.T.H. website since its launch.

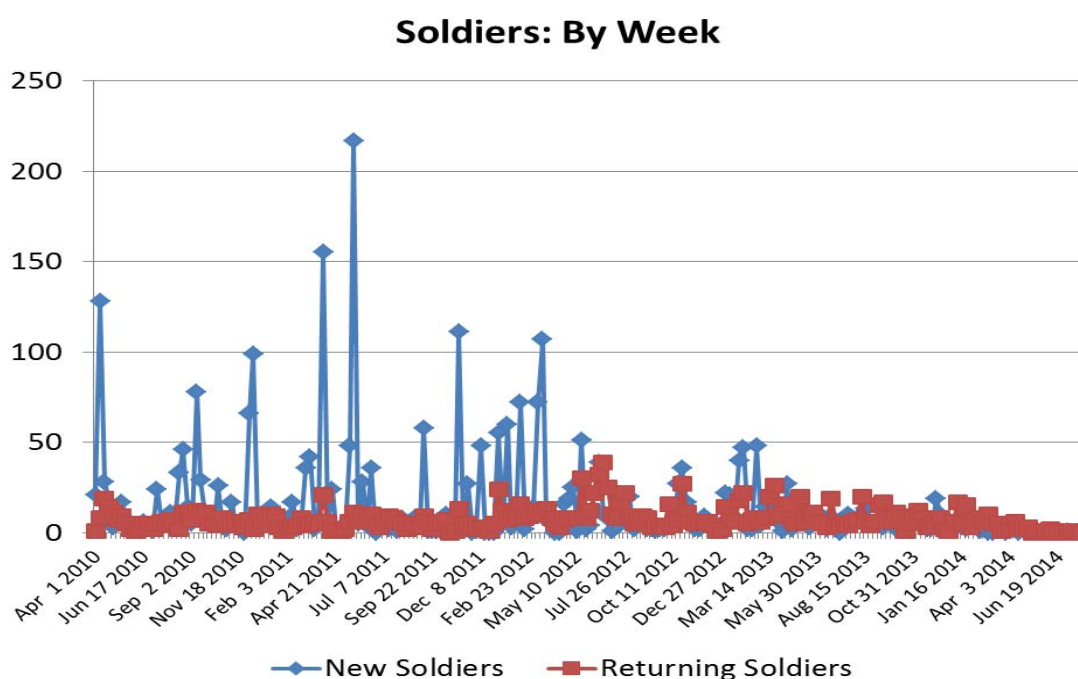


***Figure 1: H.E.A.L.T.H. Website Enrollment***

Over the past year, this study has been operationally affected as a result of missions to Afghanistan, including the deployment of the project manager, Michael Switzer. Mr. Switzer will return in September, 2014 to resume his position at PBRC on the LANG project. Further, project manager, Paul Mounts was retained on Active Duty in Sep 2013 upon return from his deployment and now serves in a part-time consultant role at PBRC. Despite these missions directly impacting the rate of registration in the H.E.A.L.T.H. program (slowing the rate of registrations across the deployed clusters), we have made significant progress in enrollment of Soldiers and their families on the H.E.A.L.T.H. website, and we have continued to see increased enrollment. That said, as the population has been saturated with information about the program over time, we are beginning to see registration rates slow down. That trend is to be expected at this point and the majority of promotion efforts at this point in the project are focused on getting users to remain engaged with the program, e.g. use the program on a somewhat regular basis (minority of users), versus registering on the program and never returning (majority of users). This is similar to other trials of this nature in that target groups (overweight) are more likely to use the website than non-target groups. In addition, users experience utilization fatigue over time and typically use the tool on a non-regular basis over time, particularly as environment saturation goes up and the promotion program and rewards wind down.

Figure 2 shows the association between promotion events and enrollment and return usage of the H.E.A.L.T.H. program. As seen in Figure 2, the largest increases in participant registration are associated with drill weekends. Over the last year, the majority of new registrations as well as return users to the website have occurred during the events scheduled by PBRC Field Managers on a monthly scheduled, drill weekend. In addition to drill weekend, there has been increased registration during specific events such as an SRP (Soldier Readiness Processing) event or YRT (Yellow Ribbon Training) events. These additional events have

allowed for more face time for our Field Managers in presenting the website program both to the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) unit staff and traditional Soldiers. That said, use of completely anonymous (no contact with counselors, no direct feedback from program via email, etc.), automated feedback based programs is expected to be somewhat low.



**Figure 2: H.E.A.L.T.H. Website Soldier Registrations by Week**

## **New Project**

### **New! Field Testing of the H.E.A.L.T.H. Program**

This past spring, Army Medicine implemented a Performance Triad (Nutrition, Fitness & Sleep) pilot program at multiple military installations. The PBRC team is in closely collaborated with the Performance Triad administration (TATRC and the Army Surgeon General's office) to launch the *Army H.E.A.L.T.H.* program as part of this pilot program. The official roll out was December 2013. The PBRC team is currently updating, adapting, and adding additional features to the Army H.E.A.L.T.H. website and mobile phone tool to be used with this program. In this

regard, there has been significant progress made in updating the tool and databases as well as the mobile application for the Triad mobile program (iphone and android platforms) launch. The official Triad program app was launched in July 2014 and Army H.E.A.L.T.H. was launched Army-wide as part of that effort. Dr. Stewart will attend a workgroup meeting with TATRC and the Surgeon General's office on September 2-5, 2014, Aberdeen Proving Ground, to discuss further plans for this effort. As this effort further develops, we will report all updates in future reports.

## Key Research Accomplishments

- The Smartphone application was reconfigured to a more sophisticated and user friendly design.
- The H.E.A.L.T.H. website program was promoted to the LANG Soldiers at drill, pre-mobilization training, Family Day, SRP, State Family Workshops and YRT events.
- Publicity materials designed to promote use of the H.E.A.L.T.H. website, e.g. t-shirts, mugs, fliers, banners, etc. were distributed.
- A new incentive program was introduced to LANG Soldiers to encourage regular use of the website program.
- The LANG H.E.A.L.T.H. electronic newsletter was distributed monthly to LANG Soldiers by the LANG Public Affairs Office.
- To date, 3, 088 Soldiers and 314 civilians have enrolled in the H.E.A.L.T.H. program.
- The Army H.E.A.L.T.H. website was significantly updated for the Triad field test and Army-wide distribution as a part of the Performance Triad program.
- Dr. Tiffany Stewart, Principal Investigator, traveled to the 3<sup>rd</sup> *International Soldiers' Physical Performance Conference*, August, 18-21, 2014, Boston, MA, to present preliminary project results on LANG H.E.A.L.T.H., as well as to provide a project update with select members of the executive committee.
- Dr. Tiffany Stewart, Principal Investigator, traveled to Aberdeen Proving Ground (September 2-5, 2014) for a meeting with the Army Surgeon General team to discuss the future of H.E.A.L.T.H. technology as it relates to the Performance Triad application and program.

## Reportable Outcomes

Not applicable at this time.

## Conclusions (Summary)

1. Overall Progress: Progress has been made in the development of new applications for the H.E.A.L.T.H. website and promotion of the website to Soldiers. The website will continue to be a dynamically updated program, incorporating cutting edge programming in nutrition and fitness, in order to keep the information on the site interesting, useful, current, and personalized for Soldiers and their families.

2. Data: Collection and evaluation of available Year 4 is ongoing and will be completed October 31, 2013. Website data collection is ongoing and up to date and preliminary results are presented in other sections of this report.

3: Future Directions:

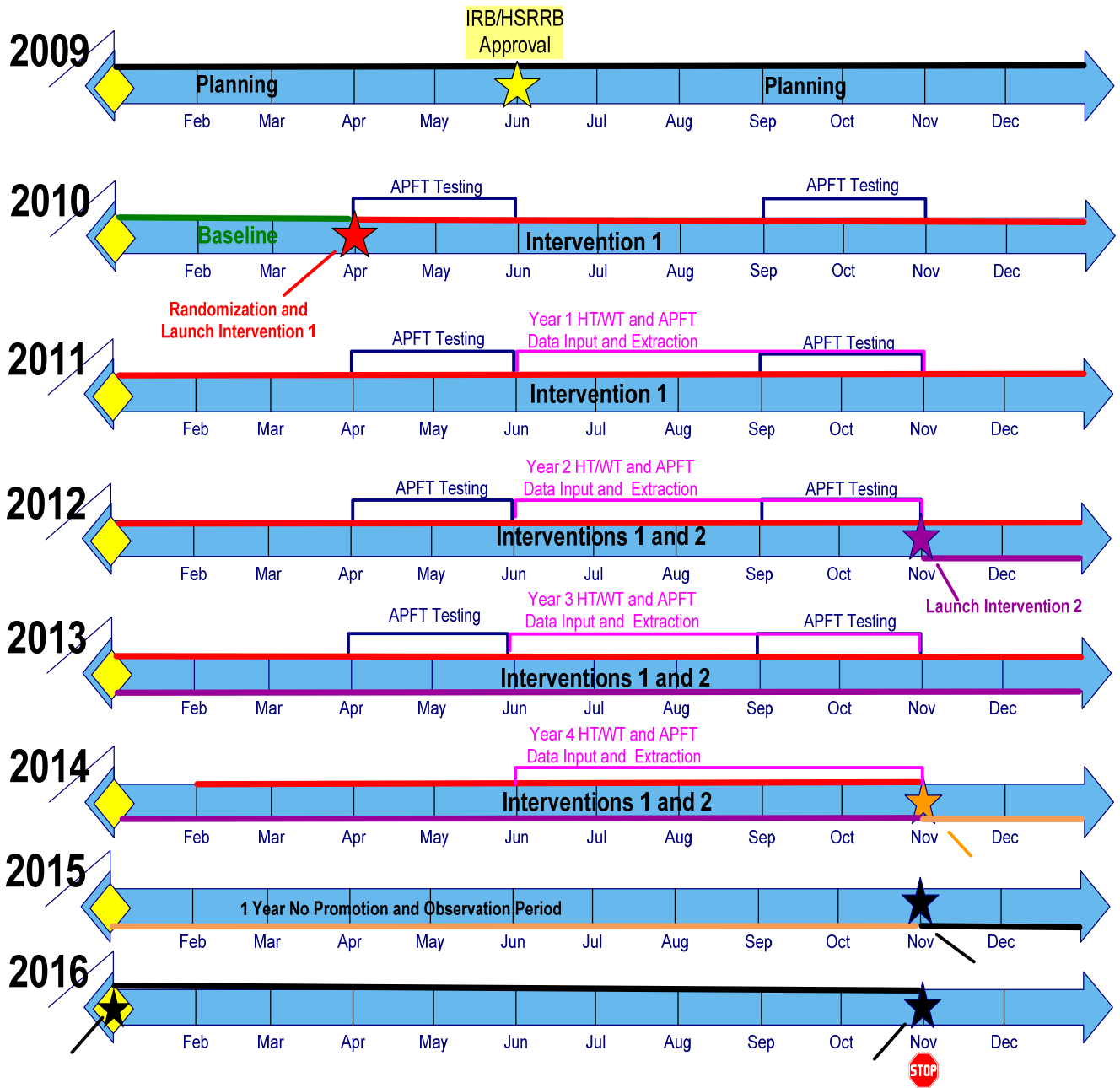
- a. Collection of Year 5 data (November 2014-October 2015).
- b. Continued promotion of the H.E.A.L.T.H. website will end on 1 November 2014.  
Usage observation of the site will be the goal of the next year of the study.
- c. Website and Smartphone application upgrades will continue throughout the duration of the program. We will continue to improve the feature and tools of the website to increase usage and provide the participants with a path to weight loss/maintenance, and improved APFT results.
- d. The website and smartphone application will continue to be upgraded for the Performance Triad program and other alterations made per new project funding and plans from the Army Surgeon General's office for the program.
- e. The annual Executive Steering Committee meeting and/or project update to members is planned for December 2015.

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## Appendix A Study Timeline



## Appendix B

### Summary of Travel

14-15 Sep 2013	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
18 Sep 2013	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
12-13 Oct 2013	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
16 Oct 2013	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
2 Nov 2013	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
20 Nov 2013	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
5-20 Dec 2013	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
18 Dec 2013	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
11-12 Jan 2014	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
15 Jan 2014	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
8-9 Feb 2014	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
19 Feb 2014	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion,	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
15-16 Mar 2014	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
19 Mar 2014	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
20-22 Mar 2014	Annual Officer Association Conference	Jeremy Bouillion, Paul Mounts	-Meeting with LANG Junior and Senior Officers discussing registration and return usage

12-13 Apr 2014	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
16 Apr 2014	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
26-27 Apr 2014	Annual Enlisted Association Conference	Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion, Verdis Walker	-Meeting with LANG Junior and Senior Enlisted Soldiers discussing registration and return usage
17-18 May 2014	LANG Units throughout Louisiana	Verdis Walker, Jonathan Zeno, Jeremy Bouillion	-Conduct LANG Drill registration drives and promotions
21 May 2014	Monthly Camp Beau Meeting	Tiffany Stewart	-Monthly meeting with members of the LANG Executive Committee to discuss project status
17-22 Aug 2014	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> International Soldiers' Physical Performance</i> conference, Boston, MA	Tiffany Stewart	-Presented preliminary results of LANG project in an oral talk -Met with select members of executive committee to provide updates on project
2-5 Sep 2014	Surgeon General Workgroup meeting: Performance Triad App 2.0	Tiffany Stewart	-Meeting to plan future of Performance Triad application and the role of Army H.E.A.L.T.H. in application

\*Note: Travel included for key events in the LANG H.E.A.L.T.H. and the Army H.E.A.L.T.H. project are listed in the table. This table does not include all daily visits to units for promotion purposes as it would be too cumbersome for the purposes of this report.